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black mesa

pueblo indians fought  
spanish guns  
till they starved

caves with pools  
of cool water

damp mossy slow

women waiting for their  
baby's head  
slick hair  
the black

squatted or sat up  
stones between their teeth

later damp blood  
leaves the placenta  
buried under  
the floor

umbilical cord in  
a safe place in  
the house  
to bring sun  
to both of them

BRISTLE CONE PINES

"It has turned out that  
longevity is a function  
not of size and majesty  
but of poverty and  
struggle."

New York Times, 6/16/74

the oldest living  
stunted and twisted  
clinging to wind  
blasted edges the  
trees like drift  
wood against the  
blue bristle cone  
forest too wild  
even for hawks or  
coyote the pines  
claw timberline  
soil so poor no  
thing else grows  
not even sagebrush  
stones tilt like  
thrown down graves  
wood smooth as skin  
the branches glow  
whipped by 4000  
years of ice 3  
quarters dead  
hanging on to life  
by a narrow strip  
of living bark  
you can count back  
to the year of  
jesus adjusting  
to dry spells to  
cold growing a  
ring of itself to  
protect itself  
like most survivors